

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LONDON 17981 211832Z

22-11

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 211816Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6783

INFO AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 17981

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, MU, UK

SUBJECT: HMG INQUIRY REGARDING MASIRAH

REF: (A) LONDON 16627; (B) STATE 271859

1. DURING DIQCUSSION OF OMAN ON NOVEMBER 21, WE ASKED LUCAS, HEAD OD FCO MIDDLE EAST DEPARTMENT, IF UK IS CONSIDERING WITHDRAWING FROM MASIRAH IN NEAR FUTURE. LUCAS SHOWED GREAT SURPRISE AND EVIDENTLY HAD HEARD OF NO SUCH PLANS. HE STATED THAT, DESPITE THE WINDING DOWN OF BRITISH COMMITMENTS IN EAST ASIA AND THE CONSEQUENT LESSENING UK DEPENDENCE ON MASIRAH, HE KNOWS OF NO HMG PRESENT INTENTION TO WITHDRAW FROM MASIRAH. HE REITERATED FCO POSITION THAT SUCH A WITHDRAWAL WOULD HAVE A POLITICAL IMPACT ON FRIENDLY ARAB STATES IN THE AREA. HE FURTHER SAID THAT, IN VIEW OF THE INTEREST THE USG HAS EXPRESSED IN MASIRAH, HMG WOULD NOTIFY THE USG OF ANY PLANS TO WITHDRAW.

2. LUCAS NOTED THAT HMG IS PREPARING TO TURN OVER MANAGEMENT OF THE AIR BASE AT SALALAH FROM THE RAF TO THE OMAN GOVERNMENT, BUT HE STRESSED THAT USE OF MASIRAH AND THE DHOFAR CAMPAIGN ARE SEPARATE.

RICHARDSON

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY BASES, MASIRAH
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LONDON17981
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750407-0377
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751121/aaaaasdu.tel
Line Count: 52
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 1
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 LONDON 16627, 75 STATE 271859
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <06 NOV 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HMG INQUIRY REGARDING MASIRAH
TAGS: PFOR, MU, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006